

21 November 2023

Autumn statement: what we expect, and what we demand

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt will deliver the autumn statement tomorrow (22 November) setting out the government's tax and spending plans for the year ahead. Read our demands, and what we expect will be announced.

The PCS national campaign on pay, pensions, job security and redundancy rights has continued throughout November, with [regular talks](#) with the Cabinet Office. As the chancellor sets out his plans around lunchtime tomorrow, he will be in no doubt as to what PCS is demanding for members.

While delegated (departmental) pay talks have begun for the next year, we continue to demand national pay bargaining. In talks with the Cabinet Office, we have demanded that systemic low and unequal pay is addressed.

We have made clear [we oppose the attempts to impose an arbitrary 60% return](#) to office working across the civil service. We are pressing for a properly agreed national hybrid working agreement. This needs to consider equality and care responsibilities and health and safety.

On jobs, Hunt made a seemingly arbitrary [commitment to cut jobs](#) to pre-Brexit levels. PCS has reminded the Cabinet Office that talks on job security were a part of concessions made following our successful national campaign of strike action. The chancellor should be in no doubt that we will consider balloting for more strike action over our demands if we need to.

Our expectations: more cruelty before Christmas

With the commitments for no more public sector spending, we expect the statement will do little to alleviate the cost-of-living crisis for our members and our communities.

We could see plans to throw more money at the failing Rwanda deportations scheme, in continuation of an inhumane scheme that should have been put out of its misery after the [recent Supreme Court ruling](#).

Harsher benefit sanctions could be set out, with “fit notes” being taken away from doctors and instead being issued by the DWP, which is already massively under resourced. Even worse, claimants could lose access to free prescriptions and dental treatments.

Those who do benefit from Hunt’s plans are likely to be at the higher end of the income scale, with cuts to inheritance tax, and raising the income tax threshold to put more money in the pockets of higher earners.

The statement will be televised live on most news channels.

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